



COURT NEWS



Chief Judge Barry Russell

2004

Jon D. Ceretto, Executive Officer/Clerk

CHIEF JUDGE BARRY RUSSELL HONORED AS "2004 OUTSTANDING JURIST"

On May 26, 2004, Chief Judge Barry Russell was recognized for his service on the bench as he was named the Los Angeles County Bar Association's (LACBA) "2004 Outstanding Jurist." More than 400 guests attended a luncheon at the Omni Los Angeles Hotel held in his honor.

The award is given each year to a current or past member of the federal or state judiciary in Los Angeles County who has made significant contributions from the bench through his/her judicial ability and experience; judicial temperament and demeanor; knowledge of the law; contribution to the improvement or education of the legal community; contribution to the practice of law and the community at large; and education and diligence. Of the 25 judges receiving this honor since 1980, Judge Russell is the first bankruptcy judge to receive the LACBA's Outstanding Jurist Award.

Speakers included the Honorable Dorothy W. Nelson, Senior Judge, United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit; the Honorable Consuelo Marshall, Chief Judge, United States District Court, Central District of California; Mr. Robin Meadow, LACBA President; Margaret P. Stevens, LACBA Barristers President; and Mr. John A. Lapinski, Esq. In attendance were Bankruptcy Judges Alan M. Ahart, Sheri Bluebond,



(From Left to Right)
Mr. Robin Meadow, Hon. Consuelo Marshall,
Hon. Barry Russell, Hon. Dorothy W. Nelson,
Mr. John A. Lapinski

Samuel L. Bufford, Thomas B. Donovan, Ernest M. Robles, and Maureen A. Tighe.

Judge Nelson attested to Judge Russell's outstanding legal ability and that he is a man of vision and honor "who gets things done." On a lighter note, she told the group that Judge Russell was affectionately known as "Mr. Bankruptcy." Chief Judge Marshall imparted that she thoroughly enjoys working with Judge Russell as Chief Bankruptcy Judge, and they regularly discuss common issues affecting the Bankruptcy and District Courts. She also commented that Judge Russell is thoughtful, bright, and takes his role seriously. Mr. Lapinski marveled that Judge Russell is "always in motion" and that he is a "dynamo" who exceptionally "manages his schedule of activities." He also emphasized that

the award confirms the importance of the work done by the Bankruptcy Court.

Judge Russell thanked the LACBA for the award, which he called a "once in a lifetime" honor. He introduced and thanked his wife, family, the other judges, and Katie Kwok, his Judicial Assistant. He reminisced that he remembers his first day on the bench "like it was yesterday." He remarked that although in 1974 the

position was highly sought after, the appointment to the bankruptcy bench is even more coveted and prestigious today. He recalled the many changes in bankruptcy over the years, and that it seems every major law firm now has a group specializing in bankruptcy. He concluded by thanking Judges Nelson and Marshall and Mr. Lapinski for their kind remarks and noted that he has been inspired by many of the previous award recipients.

Judge Russell was first appointed to the bench in 1974. He was then reappointed in 1986 and in 2000. He is presently the most senior bankruptcy judge in the Ninth Circuit and the fourth most senior bankruptcy judge in the United States. Judge Russell served on

(continued on page 2)

CLERK'S OFFICE ADDS NEW BENEFIT FOR *eFile* USERS

Effective June 2, 2004, attorneys who electronically "batch-file" chapter 7 petitions for the same division may have their cases assigned to the same trustee, regardless of the terminal digit of the case number. "Batch-filing" is electronically filing between 2 and 10 petitions simultaneously. To the greatest extent possible, the Clerk's Office will also schedule 341(a) meetings for "batch-filed" cases at the same date and time, in conformance with the schedule the U.S. Trustee provides for these meetings. This will save considerable travel time and expense for attorneys who file more than one chapter 7 petition at a time. Rather than attend multiple 341(a) meetings scheduled on different dates and times, attorneys using *eFile* can make a single trip to attend a 341(a) meeting for as many as 10 clients.

If you are not already registered to use *eFile*, you can register online from the *eFile* home page, which can be accessed at <https://efile.cacb.uscourts.gov> or through the **Electronic Services** *eFile* buttons of the Court's web site at www.cacb.uscourts.gov. The *eFile* Support Center is available to assist you and may be reached at (213) 894-2365 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays). Currently, all registered attorneys may file chapter 7 voluntary petitions, Motions for Relief from the Automatic Stay, and complaints through *eFile*.

PLAY GOLF? YOU'RE INVITED!

The Debtor Assistance Project's 2nd Annual Charity Golf Tournament to benefit Public Counsel will take place on October 29, 2004, at the Industry Hills Golf Club in the City of Industry. The Babe Zaharias Course will be used. The check-in time for participants is 9:30 a.m., and the shotgun start time is 11:00 a.m.

The entry fee is \$120 per person, which includes green fee, cart, range balls, and dinner. For dinner only, the price is \$50.00. Prizes/awards will be given for "Closest to the Pin," "Longest Drive," and "Low Gross (Scramble) Teams."

If you are interested in participating, complete an entry form and submit it with your entry fee to: Robinson, Diamant & Wolkowitz, 1888 Century Park East, Suite 1500, Los Angeles, CA 90067, Attention: Timothy Yoo. Please make checks payable to "Public Counsel." The deadline to register is September 30, 2004. For information about the tournament go to www.charitygolfonline.com, click on **Tournament Search**, and then the tournament date.

For information about the tournament, tee box sponsorship, or if you wish to donate prizes, please e-mail Tim Yoo at TYOO@RDWLAWCORP.COM.



(continued from page 1)

CHIEF JUDGE BARRY RUSSELL HONORED AS "2004 OUTSTANDING JURIST"

the Ninth Circuit's Bankruptcy Appellate Panel from March 1988 to December 2001, serving as Chief Bankruptcy Appellate Panel Judge from September 1999 through December 2001. A frequent lecturer, Judge Russell was the first American invited by the Supreme People's Court in the Republic of China to lecture on bankruptcy law (1988). He is also the author of the "Bankruptcy Evidence Manual" (1987) and is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 1987 American Bar Association's Franklin N. Flaschner Judicial Award as the outstanding judge in the United States in a trial court of special jurisdiction.

Congratulations, Judge Russell, on this wonderful honor and career milestone.

CLERK'S OFFICE LAUNCHES NEW CHAPTER 13 PETITION PILOT PROGRAM

On June 14, 2004, *eFile* began its highly anticipated chapter 13 petition pilot program. Participating attorneys Ghada H. Philips, Elizabeth Torres, Kevin T. Simon, and Sunita N. Sood, along with staff members, attended a training session in which *eFile* staff members demonstrated the electronic filing of a chapter 13 petition. These attorneys represent some of the top chapter 13 petition filers in the district. The Clerk's Office anticipates that the electronic filing of chapter 13 petitions will soon be available to all registered *eFile* attorneys. *Court News* will keep you updated on any further developments.

BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP OPPORTUNITY IN LOS ANGELES

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit invites applications from highly qualified individuals for the position of Bankruptcy Judge for the Central District of California. The individual selected will maintain chambers in Los Angeles, but may be required to travel to other divisions to hear cases. In 2006, there may be an opportunity to relocate to the Santa Ana Division. Applications may be downloaded from the Ninth Circuit's web site at www.ce9.uscourts.gov. For more information, contact the Office of the Circuit Executive at (415) 556-2000, or write to 95 Seventh Street, Suite 429, San Francisco, CA 94103-1518, Attention: Bankruptcy Recruitment, CAC.

THE LAFC OFFERS CHAPTER 7 BANKRUPTCY TRAINING CLINIC

Due to popular demand, on Saturday, July 10, 2004, the Los Angeles Free Clinic (Lafc) will conduct another "Chapter 7 Bankruptcy Training Clinic." The training is designed to teach legal professionals how to assist clients *in pro per* in declaring a chapter 7 bankruptcy or may act as a refresher course for legal professionals who have been exposed to bankruptcy, but would like to have the most current information. Participants will receive 4.25 hours of State Bar-approved MCLE credit. To register, call Christine F. Robinson at (323) 337-1709 or 1708.

Court Statistics January - June 2004

	2004 ANNUAL ESTIMATE	2003 TOTAL	% CHANGE 04 vs 03
Case Filings:			
Case Commencement:			
Chapter 7	56,228	65,227	-14%
Chapter 11	305	371	-18%
Chapter 13	5,802	10,088	-42%
*TOTAL	62,335	75,686	-18%
Complaints:			
Dischargeability	1,666	2,055	-19%
Recover Money/Property	3,933	3,712	6%
All Other	518	401	30%
TOTAL	6,117	6,168	-1%
Motions:			
Personal Property	4,281	6,346	-33%
Real Property	4,068	6,525	38%
Unlawful Detainer	700	883	-21%
Other RFS	434	504	-14%
Dismiss	9,044	9,916	-9%
Dismiss/Convert	176	241	-27%
Fees, Employment, Expenses	9,362	11,196	-16%
TOTAL	28,065	35,611	-21%
National Filing Trends			
	12-Month period ending 03/2004	12-Month period ending 03/2003	% Change 04 vs 03
Chapter 7	1,176,654	1,135,436	3.6%
Chapter 11	11,649	10,722	8.6%
Chapter 13	465,878	464,369	0.3%
*TOTAL	1,654,181	1,610,527	2.7%

*Excludes Chapter 9, Chapter 12, and Section 304 filings.

20 Largest and Other Cases of Interest Filed in the Last 24 Months

	Debtor Name	Case Number	Date Filed	Chapter	Asset Level in Millions	Liability Level in Millions	Last Milestone
Largest Cases (over \$100 M Assets)	Consolidated Freightways Corporation of Delaware	RS-02-24284-MG	09/03/02	11	\$1,110	\$2,211	Order authorizing sale of real property
	USA Sogo, Inc.	LA-03-18660-SB	03/31/03	7	\$177	\$314	Trustee's intent to file Ch 7 of affiliate
	Imperial Credit Industries, Inc.	LA-03-28969-ES	07/17/03	11	\$169	\$291	Status hearing continued to 10/7/04
	Vista Hospital Systems, Inc.	RS-03-18901-DN	06/10/03	11	\$142	\$132	Chapter 11 Plan modified on 6/25/04
	InterDent Service Corporation	SA-03-13594-JR	05/09/03	11	\$139	\$348	Status Report filed on 6/18/04 (post conf.)
	Sun World International, Inc.	RS-03-11370-DN	01/30/03	11	\$138	\$121	Exclusive period to file plan extended to 10/8/04
High Profile Cases*	Opal Concepts, Inc.	SA-02-15441-JR	07/16/02	11	\$50-100	Over \$100	Applications for fees: Hearings set for 7/29/04
	OAN Services, Inc.	ND-02-13720-RR	12/17/02	11	\$94	\$124	Order approving compromise and settlement entered 5/10/04
	Centis, Inc.	SA-02-15865-JB	07/31/02	11	\$55	\$940	Plan confirmed on on 5/28/04
	Illuminations.com, Inc.	LA-04-10427-SB	01/12/04	11	\$52	\$55	Order (6/10/04) authorizing sale of warehouse equipment
	QualPro Corporation	SA-02-19719-JB	12/18/02	11	\$47	\$218	Hearing to consolidate related cases set for 7/6/04
	Spectrum Restaurant Group, Inc.	SA-03-15911-RA	08/06/03	11	\$39	\$107	Hearing set for Debtors' Motion for approving modifications of Debtors' Fifth Amended Plan on 7/2/04
	Granada Hills Community Hospital	SV-02-20579-AG	11/26/02	11	\$35	\$32	Order signed 3/9/04 selling property to LAUSD, Appeal filed on 3/18/04 and is pending
	Strouds Acquisition Corporation	LA-03-23620-ER	05/20/03	11	\$27	\$36	Status Conference re: debt owed liquidation
	Clothestime Stores, Inc.	SA-03-14555-RA	06/13/03	7	\$15	\$49	Administrative claims granted
	Botanicals International Extracts	LA-03-18788-BB	04/01/03	11	\$10	\$15	Plan of Reorg filed by Unsec. Creditors 6/25/04
	Checkmate Staffing, Inc.	SA-03-19318-JR	12/29/03	11	\$22	\$31	Plan to be filed by 07/02/04
	Santa Paula Memorial Hospital	ND-03-13454-RR	12/22/03	11	\$18	\$6	Extended time to file claims by 8/31/04
	Sega Gameworks LLC	LA-04-15404-BB	03/09/04	11	\$26	\$36	Order granting extension to assume/reject lease on land to 8/9/04
	Interamericas Financial Holdings, Ltd.	LA-04-17892-ER	04/04/04	7	\$1-10	\$10-50	Order to Transfer to So. District of TX on 6/3/04

*Based on a combination of Asset and Liability Levels, Number of creditors, high activity, and/or name recognition.

Court News

is published by the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California as an informational service for the practitioners and public of our Court.

Jon D. Ceretto
Executive Officer/Clerk

Michael E. Rotberg
Chief Deputy - Operations

Kathleen J. Campbell
Chief Deputy - Administration

Suggestions and comments are always welcome.
Please call (213) 894-1175 or e-mail us at <Oscar_Sosa@cacb.uscourts.gov>.